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Letter dated 20 March 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose herewith the address of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine to the parliaments of foreign States and parliamentary assemblies of international organizations regarding the condemnation of political repressions by the Russian Federation against citizens of Ukraine as a result of the armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine and regarding the release of political prisoners who are citizens of Ukraine (see annex).

I would appreciate your kind assistance in having the present letter and its annex distributed as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 34 (a), and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Volodymyr **Yelchenko**
Ambassador,
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 20 March 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Address of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine to the Parliaments of Foreign States and Parliamentary Assemblies of International Organizations regarding the Condemnation of Political Repressions by the Russian Federation against Citizens of Ukraine as a Result of Armed Aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, and regarding the Release of Political Prisoners who are Citizens of Ukraine

Condemning in the strongest terms the ongoing armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine that commenced on 20 February 2014 and has resulted in illegal occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, the city of Sevastopol and certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions,

Emphasizing the inadmissibility of any violations by the Russian occupation authorities of human rights and freedoms in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine,

Underscoring that the Russian Federation as the occupying power under The Hague Convention (IV) respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land and its Annex: Regulations concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land of 18 October 1907, the Geneva Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949 and the Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I) of 8 June 1977, bears full responsibility for violation of the rights of the civilian population in the occupied territory,

Taking into account the Resolutions by the United Nations General Assembly 71/205 "Situation of Human Rights in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the City of Sevastopol (Ukraine)" adopted on 19 December 2016 and 72/190 "Situation of Human Rights in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the City of Sevastopol, Ukraine" adopted on 19 December 2017, which record and condemn systemic violations of human rights perpetrated by the Russian occupation authorities, including extrajudicial executions, enforced disappearances, politically motivated persecutions, restriction of basic political freedoms of residents of Crimea, and demand the Russian Federation to fully comply with its obligations under international law as an occupying power, as well as the Order of the International Court of Justice of 19 April 2017 relating to provisional measures in case *Ukraine vs the Russian Federation* regarding the application of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination of 21 December 1965,

Taking into account numerous decisions and resolutions by international organizations and their parliamentary assemblies, including the European Parliament, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, which condemn the violations by the Russian Federation of human rights and politically and ethnically motivated persecutions, and call on the occupying power to immediately release all the illegally detained persons,

The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine urges the parliaments of foreign states and parliamentary assemblies of international organizations as follows:

to condemn the actions by the Russian Federation aimed against territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine as such that contradict the universally accepted norms and principles of international law, to increase politico-diplomatic and sanction pressure on the occupying power until complete halting of its aggression and restoration of sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized state border;

to condemn the violation by the Russian occupation administration of basic human and citizen rights and freedoms in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, as well as in temporarily occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk regions, particularly the illegal, politically and ethnically motivated persecution of opponents of the occupation, including by way of illegal detention and conviction of civil activists under unfounded and/or fabricated criminal charges;

to use all the available international politico-diplomatic and sanction mechanisms towards the Russian Federation in order that it immediately release all the hostages captured as a result of the armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, as well as release the citizens of Ukraine illegally detained by the Russian Federation under unfounded and politically motivated charges, including Uzeir Abdullaiev, Teimur Abdullaiev, Rustem Abiltarov, Zevri Abseitov, Muslim Aliiev, Refat Alimov, Ernes Ametov, Kiazim Ametov, Marlen Asanov, Volodymyr Balukh, Enver Bekirov, Memet Belialov, Oleksiy Bessarabov, Rustem Vaitov, Valentyn Vyhivskyi, Pavlo Hryb, Bekir Dehermendzhi, Emil Dzhemadenov, Arsen Dzhepparov, Volodymyr Dudka, Ruslan Zeytullaiev, Server Zekiriaiev, Tymur Ibrahimov, Rustem Ismailov, Yevhen Karakashev, Mykola Karpiuk, Stanislav Klykh, Oleksandr Kolchenko, Andriy Kolomiyets, Oleksandr Kostenko, Emir-Usein Kuku, Serhiy Lytvinov, Enver Mamutov, Remzi Memetov, Emil Minasov, Yevhen Panov, Yuriy Primov, Ismail Ramazanov, Ferat Sayfullayev, Aider Saledinov, Seiran Saliiev, Oleh Sentsov, Mykola Syzonovych, Vadym Siruk, Oleksiy Stohniy, Roman Sushchenko, Ruslan Trubach, Asan Chapukh, Oleksiy Chyrniy, Hlib Shabliy, Mykola Shyptur, Dmytro Shtyblikov, Victor Shur as well as all the other illegally imprisoned and illegally detained citizens of Ukraine in the temporarily occupied territories of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, the city of Sevastopol, certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions, and in the territory of the Russian Federation;

to demand that the Russian Federation unconditionally fulfill the Order of the International Court of Justice of 19 April 2017 relating to provisional measures in case *Ukraine vs the Russian Federation* regarding the application of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination of 21 December 1965;

to demand that the Russian Federation provide unhindered access of international missions and human rights organizations to the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine in order to conduct constant monitoring of the situation with human rights;

to use all possible kinds of sanctions against the administrative officials of the state governmental bodies of the Russian Federation and the occupation administration of the Russian Federation involved in the prosecution of the political prisoners who are citizens of Ukraine.

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Identical letters dated 20 March 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic finds it deplorable that, in their letter dated 9 March 2018 concerning the implementation of Security Council resolution 2401 (2018) (S/2018/211), the delegations of the United States, Great Britain and France have continued their practice of propagating lies and fabrications by levelling accusations that are aimed at discrediting the Syrian Government, in violation of their obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

Thanks to the sacrifices made by the Syrian Arab Army and its allies, tens of thousands of civilians from eastern Ghutah have recently been liberated from the oppression of the terrorist organizations the Nusrah Front and Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), which are backed by Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, the United States, France and Great Britain, the Rahman Corps, which is backed by the Qatari regime, the Army of Islam, which is backed by the Wahhabi Saudi Arabian regime, and the Ahrar al-Sham Movement, which is backed by the Turkish regime. For years, those groups have used the civilians of eastern Ghutah as human shields, deprived them of their freedom, cut off their livelihoods, scattered their families, and diverted the humanitarian aid provided to eastern Ghutah by the United Nations to benefit their own members. One of the most recent violations committed by those groups was the targeting of the humanitarian corridors that the Syrian Government had secured to allow civilians to flee eastern Ghutah. As a result, humanitarian assistance convoys were unable to reach beneficiaries in that area.

The letter from the three delegations conclusively proves that they have no interest in or understanding of the substance of resolution 2401 (2018), which affirms the sovereign right of the Syrian State to combat terrorist organizations, purge terrorism from the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic and restore security and stability to Syrians throughout the Syrian Arab Republic. Contrary to the allegations contained in the letter, the Syrian Arab Republic and its allies have implemented resolution 2401 (2018) scrupulously while complying with the obligations of the Syrian Arab Republic under international humanitarian law by:

- Declaring an extended, daily humanitarian truce between the hours of 9 a.m. and 2 p.m.;

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- Opening a number of humanitarian corridors for civilians who wish to leave the areas of eastern Ghutah controlled by armed terrorist groups and seek the protection of the Syrian State;
- Making shelter, food, medical care and other life necessities available to persons displaced from eastern Ghutah, whom the armed terrorist groups had deprived of the most basic necessities of life and humanitarian assistance. As at 20 March 2018, approximately 80,000 civilians had been evacuated to shelters;
- Enabling persons who had been displaced from eastern Ghutah to return to their villages and cities hours after the Syrian Arab Army had liberated them, and delivering all types of humanitarian assistance to them in their homes, in cooperation with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent and international governmental and non-governmental organizations operating in Syria;
- Enabling United Nations humanitarian organizations and dozens of vehicles loaded with humanitarian aid to gain access to Duma and other major cities in eastern Ghutah.

It is ironic that the delegations of the United States, Great Britain and France, despite being permanent members of the Security Council and, as such, purportedly committed to combating global terrorism, have agreed to align their policies and interests fully with those of the armed terrorist groups deployed in the eastern Ghutah region, namely, the Nusrah Front, ISIL, the Army of Islam, Ahrar al-Sham and the Rahman Corps, and to promote the terror sowed by those groups and their spurious allegations against the Syrian Government, such as those that are set out in the letter dated 28 February 2018 from the above-mentioned delegations (S/2018/169). The Syrian Government notes that the armed terrorist groups deployed in the eastern Ghutah region "implemented" Security Council resolution 2401 (2018) by attacking the civilians of eastern Ghutah as the they fled the terrorists' repression and sought the protection of the Syrian State, by targeting humanitarian assistance convoys headed for eastern Ghutah and by firing hundreds of shells and rockets at Damascus, killing and injuring hundreds of persons, most of them children and women.

The Syrian Government wishes to remind everyone that the repeated allegations that it has used chemical weapons in Ghutah have become tired and pointless. The Government simply does not possess chemical weapons. The facts on the ground confirm that it is the armed terrorist groups, including the mercenaries of the so-called White Helmets group, which is backed by Washington, London, Paris, Ankara, Doha and Riyadh, that have used such weapons in the past and are prepared to use them now and in the future, so that those groups, as they have done on previous occasions, can accuse the Syrian Government and its allies of using such weapons.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative